UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

PROVISIONAL

S/PV.2974
22 January 1991

ENGLISH

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 22 January 1991, at 5 p.m.

President:	Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA	(Zaire)
Members:	Austria	Mr. HOHENFELLNER
	Belgium	Mr. NOTERDAEME
	China	Mr. LI Daoyu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. ANET
	Cuba	Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA
	Ecuador	Mr. AYALA LASSO
	France	Mr. BLANC
	India	Mr. GHAREKHAN
	Romania	Mr. MUNTEANU
	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Mr. VORONTSOV
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir David HANNAY
	United States of America	Mr. PICKERING
	Yemen	Mr. AL-ASHTAL
	Zimbabwe	Mr. MUMBENGEGWI

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91-60241/A 4404V (E)

The meeting was called to order at 6.20 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN LIBERIA

LETTER DATED 15 JANUARY 1991 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF COTE D'IVOIRE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (S/22076)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Liberia and Nigeria in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Bull (Liberia) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Gambari (Nigeria) took a place at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the request contained in a letter dated 15 January 1991 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/22076). I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/22025, which contains the text of a letter dated

(The President)

14 December 1990 from the Permanent Representative of the Gambia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The first speaker is the representative of Liberia, upon whom I now call.

Mr. BULL (Liberia): It is a distinct honour to speak before the Security Council as it seeks, for the first time, to respond to the tragic consequences of the civil war that has devastated Liberia for over a year. That a response is now being made, more than one year since the conflict started, raises, in my opinion, the imperative need to review, and perhaps reinterpret, the Charter, particularly its provision which calls for non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States.

Regrettably, the strict application of this provision has hampered the effectiveness of the Council and its principal objective of maintaining international peace and security. As a result, millions of innocent men, women and children have continued to be victimized by conflicts throughout the world, and this world body, which has the moral obligation and authority, has been prevented from averting these human tragedies.

It will be recalled that seven months ago we made efforts to have the Council seized with the deteriorating situation in Liberia, which efforts were not approved. Today, after the displacement of nearly a half of Liberia's population of 2.5 million, after the loss of thousands of innocent lives and the virtual destruction of the entire country, we meet here with one resolve: to address and support the peaceful resolution of Liberia's tragic civil war.

But we must not dwell on the past. No matter how tragic or how fortunate it may be, we must look to the future with a new zeal and determination, having benefited from the lessons of the past. Full implementation of the peace plan formulated by the Economic Community of West African States could lead to the establishment of durable and lasting peace in Liberia. However, this will depend

(Mr. Bull, Liberia)

in large measure on the willingness and commitment of all the parties to the conflict to put the interests of the Liberian people above their own, for the people of Liberia fervently desire peace. They do not want or deserve any more wars.

(Mr. Bull, Liberia)

As efforts are made to find a peaceful solution to the Liberian crisis, there is a concomitant need to address the deteriorating social and economic conditions in the country. A recent report, issued on 20 December 1990 by Reuters, highlights the enormous problems confronting Liberia. According to that report, the civil war has made Liberia "the world's biggest human tragedy at present". The report further notes that the

> "response to the United Nations aid appeal issued on 5 December has not been very successful. Mr. Frank Ferhagen of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) is quoted as saying that
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> > 'The situation is a forgotten emergency. Government structures are nonexistent. Hospitals are not functioning. No one has been vaccinated since the beginning of the year, and agriculture is at a standstill'".

It is estimated that over 80,000 Liberians have died in the civil war. And many more are still dying because of the lack of basic necessities such as medication, food and shelter. Nearly half of Liberia's population has been displaced, and several hundred thousand are refugees in neighbouring States. Most of the infrastructure of the country has been destroyed.

The international community is requested to respond positively to the humanitarian and other relief programmes that need to be implemented. The tasks of repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation, reconstruction and the rebuilding of democratic institutions will also require the assistance of the international community.

In that connection I wish to reiterate our grateful appreciation to the members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Secretary-General of the United Nations and all the Members that have contributed to the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and continue to make sacrifices in order to help restore peace in Liberia.

(Mr. Bull, Liberia)

On behalf of the people of Liberia, I ask for the empathy of members and for the continued support of the United Nations in meeting the urgent humanitarian needs of Liberia, a founding Member of this Organization.

I should like also to thank the Security Council and its members for the decision taken this evening to issue a statement on the Liberian crisis.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The next speaker is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. GAMBARI (Nigeria): I wish to thank you, Sir, and the other members of the Security Council for giving me this opportunity to make a few comments on the proposed statement by the President of the Security Council on the tragic situation in Liberia.

I speak today as the alternate Chairman of the group of Ambassadors of countries members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) here at the United Nations. We are deeply gratified that the international community has decided to put itself on record in support of the process of restoring peace, security and stability to the war-torn country of Liberia.

This is not the time to revisit the events that led to the tragic civil war in Liberia. It is certainly not the time to apportion blame. The leaders of the Economic Community of West African States decided they had to respond collectively to the cries of women and children and of other victims of the sad conflict in Liberia. This they did by authorizing and supporting the operations of the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). ECOMOG's mandate is not to take sides, but to reconcile the sides, to restore peace and to create an atmosphere conducive to the resumption of free political activity and, eventually, democratic elections.

(Mr. Gambari, Nigeria)

The leaders of the sub-region worked hard for the establishment of a cease-fire, and all the parties to the conflict have in fact agreed to respect that cease-fire. It is important that the Security Council urge them to continue to respect that cease-fire.

ECOWAS should be commended for acting in ways that promote the principles of the United Nations Charter by stepping in to prevent the situation in Liberia from degenerating into a situation likely to constitute a real threat to international peace and security. Moreover, by acting to restore peace and stability in Liberia with the active support of the people of Liberia ECOMOG is already helping build a basis for the exercise of the most basic right of the people of Liberia, the right to life.

Nigeria commends the draft statement on Liberia which is to be issued on behalf of the Security Council. My country wishes also to commend the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts in organizing humanitarian assistance to the sovereign people of Liberia. We call on the international community not only to intensify humanitarian support for Liberia and for the hundreds of thousands of refugees inside Liberia and in neighbouring African States, but also to provide financial and logistic support for ECOMOG so it can complete its mission at the earliest possible time. That mission is to restore peace, normalcy and stability to a sister West African State. That mission is a noble one endorsed by all the leaders of the West African sub-region as well as by the Organization of African Unity.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

(The President)

"The members of the Security Council took note of the final communiqué of the first extraordinary session of the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) issued in Bamako, Mali, on 28 November 1990.

"The members of the Security Council commend the efforts made by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government to promote peace and normalcy in Liberia.

"The members of the Security Council call upon the parties to the conflict in Liberia to continue to respect the cease-fire agreement which they have signed and to co-operate fully with the ECOWAS to restore peace and normalcy in Liberia.

"The members of the Security Council express appreciation to the Member States, the Secretary-General and humanitarian organizations for the humanitarian assistance to Liberia and call for additional assistance. In this connection the Council welcomes the resumption of the United Nations emergency programme in Liberia following the acceptance of a general cease-fire.

"The members of the Security Council support the appeal launched by the ECOWAS Summit to the international community for increased humanitarian assistance to the people of Liberia".

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.